

## **The Cry for Justice**

### **Psalm 11**

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#### Preface

Our world suffers from injustice as many voices howl for their own view or version of justice. As humans affected by sin, we are unable to have true justice, as each one of us has a view of perfection and balance that is tainted by our experiences and our selfishness. True justice—biblical justice—requires holiness and the absence of sin, with decisions being made on the basis of God's truth and God's righteousness. In this world, the Christian can rest assured that in any circumstance, God is in control.

#### Sermon

For our Scripture reading this morning, let's turn to Psalm 11. We read Psalm 11 in our elder meeting on Wednesday night, prayed through it, and we just wanted to share some of these thoughts with you. As we're reading I'm going to stop and intersperse a few comments to address some of the political and social tensions we're facing in our country now, and after that we'll spend some time in prayer.

While you're turning to Psalm 11, I'll remind you that it was a little over a year ago when we raised the alarm about the issue of social justice—critical race theory, critical theory in our country. This unrest—the mobs demanding change and the spirit animating some of the movements and protests—this is what we were trying to warn you about back then over a year ago. A generation of liberals has spawned a generation of radicals.

But the cries for justice in this country have been growing for a long, long time and have been growing louder and louder as America has turned from truth to embrace, pursue, and celebrate sin. This country has rejected the only basis for justice that exists, which is the revealed truth of God's Word. Because abuses and offenses have multiplied, which is all that's left when you turn away from God's Word, injustice has increased, the cries for social justice have grown louder, more shrill—and now angrier.

And those demands for justice, we need to understand as Christians, are in vain because this world cannot deliver. When the world has abandoned God's absolute truth and embraced relativism—this group's truth versus that group's truth; it's this individual's truth versus that individual's truth—since there is no consensus that can be reached about truth in a world of relativism, there is no standard and no foundation for justice.

So last year we had two full nights of seminar on this mounting challenge and the danger it posed to society and to the church—sort of a “deep dive” into the issue as we spent time together. And those seminars prepared us for the September conference on social justice with our guest, Dr. Tom Ascol, and the opening session was called “God's Test for our Time.”

That is what is going on now, beloved. This is God’s test for our time. For the world, what we’re seeing is just a preview of coming unrest, a “preview of coming attractions,” so to speak. It’s an attention-getter for the world to take note of the madness and turn their eyes away from any hope around them and to turn their eyes instead to God and His truth, to repent before him, to put faith in Jesus Christ, to abandon moral relativism and subjectivism, and to turn to His truth. For the church—for us as believers, as God’s people—this is God’s test for us, now.

Take a look at Psalm 11. This is a psalm of David. He says:

1  
In the Lord I take refuge;  
how can you say to my soul,  
    “Flee like a bird to your mountain,  
2  
for behold, the wicked bend the bow;  
    they have fitted their arrow to the string  
    to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart;  
3  
if the foundations are destroyed,  
    what can the righteous do?”

Let’s stop for a moment. Many today are feeling exactly that way, aren’t they? Many, especially in older generations, are feeling angst that this country they built with their sweat and labor—what men went overseas to fight for and die for and shed their blood for—is being torn apart. Many people today are feeling perplexed, tempted toward fear and panic. And whether that fear and panic are real, based on some solid evidence, or whether it’s a perceived fear based on a narrative they’re hearing, based on news, fear has gripped the hearts of many in this land. And when people are gripped by fear, they do not make good decisions. They’re afraid of the coronavirus, frightened by infection, scared of a painful death. There’s fear of economic ruin because of the reaction to the coronavirus, concern about continued isolation. Now fear of police brutality, mob violence, fear of physical pain or even death. Fear of racial tensions, which not only seem irresolvable at this time but are escalating. Fear of crumbling structures, crumbling foundations, the unreliability of human leadership.

But like David, the hearts of the godly rest confidently in the Lord. That’s what it says there. “In the Lord I take refuge...I find shelter...I find comfort...I find peace.” That’s what he’s saying. And still, David had counselors surrounding him and advising him from a heart of panic and exacerbating a sense of fear right in his court. They were listening to FoxNews and CNN, clicking from story to story to get all the latest news, and they were keeping up with all the experts and listening to all the pundits and their punditry—fighting, arguing back and forth, point-counterpoint and all the rest—and they came to David and said, “Time to run! Time to ‘get out of Dodge’! Time to flee like a bird!” Because “if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

Folks, this is what we’re seeing happening in our land right now. All vestiges of a Christian

foundation, all things informed by a Christian worldview—Americans have systematically destroyed those foundations. There is no putting Humpty-Dumpty back together again. Our country has apostatized, and multiplied injustices are now the norm and are inevitable. And only brute force will be able to stem the violence—but for a time.

So what to do? What to do about it? We can see the problem—everybody is living through the problem. What do we do about it? David does not panic. David does not worry. David is not overcome with fear. He is not anxious. He turns to his troubled counselors in the rest of this psalm, and he reminds them of what they have known before but seem to have forgotten in the present distress. So he calms them down, and he reminds them of truth. Look at verses 4 to 7:

4

The Lord [Yahweh, our God] is in his holy temple;  
the Lord's throne is in heaven;  
his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.

5

The Lord tests the righteous,  
but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.

6

Let him rain coals on the wicked;  
fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup.

7

For the Lord is righteous;  
he loves righteous deeds;  
the upright shall behold his face.

What's his reminder? Simply this: Beloved, God remains on His throne. He is not dismayed. He is not troubled. He is not perplexed. He's not anxious. He's not wringing His hands. He not only anticipated all this; He sovereignly decreed it before the foundation of the world. God's on the throne. He's immutable, He's unchanging, He's omniscient. Not one thing—not one act of injustice, not one act of oppression, not one act of brutality or violence, not one thought or plan to put any of that wickedness into effect—nothing escapes His notice. Not one thing.

What is God doing? He's testing the righteous. He's testing us. He's proving where our hearts and our thoughts are right now. Make no mistake: The wicked will get their due reward. The one who loves violence will stand before God to give an account. All sin, all injustice will get its just reward. According to God's truth, which is the only truth, justice means that we all suffer the penalty of eternal damnation for our sins. That is what justice demands. Justice means we all go to hell. It is the grace of God, which is granted by His good pleasure, that He gives to satisfy all the demands of divine justice for all who will believe.

We don't know all the facts of George Floyd's arrest on the night of May 25. We don't know exactly what led to his death. We're waiting for reports to come out. And we as Christians—we of all people, our commitment to righteousness because the Lord is righteous—that means we need to be slow in coming to judgment about the events of that night. Having Officer Chauvin's

knee on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds certainly didn't increase Mr. Floyd's life expectancy. But we need to be slow, and we need to wait for investigations to run their course. We need to wait for a coroner's autopsy to come out, and all the rest.

What we Christians do know—with certainty—is that if George Floyd is in heaven, as so many people all over the news are so eager to say, it is because of the grace of God. Mr. Floyd and Mr. Chauvin, like the rest of us, are human beings created in God's image. Mr. Floyd and Mr. Chauvin, like the rest of us, are fallen sinners, and they are in desperate need of divine grace. The protesters—even the rioters and the looters, who are capitalizing on this civil/social unrest—they, too are human beings created in God's image, sinners in need of God's grace.

So what is the test? How is God testing His people? Let me ask you a few questions.

Will you, beloved—will you, Christian—turn away from other voices that induce fear and panic, and will you fix your eyes on the Lord, who is in His holy temple, who is on His righteous throne? Will you refuse to go along with the crowd—whatever crowd, whatever side lines up with your politics, opinions, experiences, preferences? Will you fix your loyalty solely on God and God alone as you pray for His righteousness to be manifested, as you pray for His justice to prevail, as you pray for His mercy to cover our land. Will you personally repent of all partiality, see people as people, as human beings, and refuse the kind of tribalism that is trying to tear this country apart? Will you see everyone—and I mean everyone, beloved—the social justice warriors, the perpetrators of violence and mayhem, the hapless victims of that violence, the fearful, the bold, the leaders, the followers, the brutal, the timid, and everybody in between—will you see them as fellow human beings created in God's image? Will you see them as fellow sinners before God—they as guilty as you, and you as guilty as they—all of them in need, like us, of divine grace?

Will you then speak as David did in Psalm 11, like the godly speak, not like the world speaks, but will you speak as one confident in your God? Will you rest in the Lord as your refuge? Will you share this message of hope—the only hope, which is found in God and His eternal Gospel? Will you speak that message? Because I'm telling you, this world—they do not have hope. They have fear. They have fear of death. And rightly so. “Do not fear the one who can kill the body and after that can do nothing. I tell you whom to fear. Fear the one who can cast body and soul into hell” [Luke 12:5].

That's what we need to tell a desperate world. We need to tell them the truth about justice, that their justice is going to be reckoned and met before a holy God, and that there is hope from the due penalty that is required by that justice: hope in Jesus Christ. Bow with me, will you?

Our Father, this is a very difficult time in our country, even here in very quiet northern Colorado, this protest and protestors are coming to our town, and they're making their voices heard. We do understand that there is angst and fear and obviously because of this lockdown of the past couple of months, people are coming out with even more angst and anger piled up. And as they come out of their lockdown, they express this anger in violence sometimes and loud crying and demands and posturing and all the rest. We're so grateful, Father, that as we have come out of

this lockdown, we come out praising your name. We are completely opposite of the world. We come out of this lockdown with joy—to sing your praises, to be together, to hear your Word explained, expounded. Father, that's not because we're something better than anybody else. In fact, we understand our sins. We understand what the Cross meant as you poured out your wrath upon one who did not deserve it: your own beloved Son. We understand what our sins cost; we understand what our sins merited. You've been so gracious to save us, to turn us from error to truth, from lies to truth, from sin to righteousness, from death to life. Father, I just pray that you would give us the temerity and the boldness and the strength to believe this truth, to hold fast to it. We pray—as we just sang—that you would hold us fast. We pray that you would help us then to speak this message to others who so desperately need it.

Father, we pray specifically for the family and friends of George Floyd, Derek Chauvin, the other officers who were arrested and have been arrested. We pray that you would bring them salvation, comfort—the comfort that comes from Christ alone. Because without His salvation, without peace and reconciliation with you, Father, there is no reconciliation with anybody else; there is no peace with anybody else. We pray for those who have been the victims of violence, brutality, and injustice. We pray for all of them, that you would cause them to give up their grievances and to see their offenses and injustices as crimes against you, that you would help them to turn away from their own case that they want to prosecute—and see that you are prosecuting a case against them—that they would bow humbly before you and give their hearts to you in faith.

We pray for our police, our first responders, National Guard members, all those who are charged with keeping us safe. We just want to thank you, first of all, for the gift of government. Thank you for our law enforcement officers. We have them in our midst. We are so grateful for them. Father, we just pray that you would return an attitude of respect and appreciation in our country for those who protect us, who keep us safe, who protect our property, who help us so that we can actually build a livelihood in this sin-cursed world. Please protect them. Please protect them from discouragement, especially as they go out and try to do their jobs faithfully. Let them not receive a black eye from others who take the law into their own hands, from others who hide behind a badge to do what is wrong. We pray, Father, that you would let their righteousness stand out, especially in the men in our midst—please strengthen them. Give them great courage; give them great joy in doing your work as ministers of righteousness here in a wicked world. And let us never be on the side of those who denounce them and call for their defunding, those who would cast aspersions on them. Father, instead, let us speak respect and appreciation for those people you've given us.

We pray, Father, also for the leadership in our cities, our counties, our states, our country. O, Father, they desperately need wisdom. And we can see everywhere that they lack it. So, Father, please grant wisdom to those who are leading. We thank you even now as we meet, for the favor of our governor, who has put guidelines and stipulations in place that allow us to meet today. We are so grateful for that favor with him, and that he and his administration have listened to religious leaders in our state—that we have had favor. We just pray for more of the same. We pray for that to spread throughout our land, that you would give us another reprieve in order that we may preach the Gospel to those who need it.

We pray for Christians right now to stand firm, that we—with this test that you've given us—would pass the test, that we would hold fast to the truth, hold fast to righteousness, that we would testify to a God of truth, a God of righteousness who loves justice and mercy.

We pray, Father, most of all for your name to be high and lifted up, that your name would be hallowed, that your Kingdom would come and that your will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. We pray for your beloved Son, that He would be lifted up and that He would draw all men to Himself. We pray that He would be honored and regarded and worshiped. Father, that's what we come to do here today, this morning—to sing praises to your name, and honor you—and honor you in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. We come to you in prayer, in humility, in confession, thanksgiving, and praise. Please direct our hearts where they ought to be. Let us fix our gaze steadfastly on you, high and lifted up, seated on your throne, sovereign over the universe. It's in you that we have hope, and we give thanks for this morning in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.